The Securitization of Russian-speaking Media in Estonia:

Case Study of ETV+ Channel

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Master's Thesis
Russian Studies
Faculty of Arts
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May 2020

HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Tiedekunta – Fakultet – Faculty Faculty of Arts, Aleksanteri Institute	Koulutusohjelma – Utbildningsprogram – Degree Programme Russian Studies	
Opintosuunta – Studieinriktning – Study Track Russian Studies 2018		
Tekijä – Författare – Author Ivan Lavrentjev		
Työn nimi – Arbetets titel – Title The Securitization of Russian-speaking Media in Estonia: Case Study of ETV+ Channel		
Työn laji – Arbetets art – Level Master's	Aika – Datum – Month and year May 2020	Sivumäärä– Sidoantal – Number of pages 60 pp.

Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

This master's thesis argues that the public discussion in Estonia on the necessity of a national Russian-language TV channel was heavily securitized. Following broad debate involving politicians, experts and journalists, the channel ETV+ went on air in 2015, as a part of Estonian Public Broadcasting. This thesis studies statements by Estonian public figures relating to the TV channel through the securitization framework.

First, the thesis explores securitization theory, developed by the Copenhagen School. The theory broadens the notion of security to non-military domains. The Copenhagen School argued that an issue becomes a matter of security if placed above every-day politics, once an actor convinces the audience of the existential threat posed to the referent object. Despite extensive criticism, securitization is applicable to the issue of national minorities.

The thesis scrutinizes the social and political background of Russian-speakers in Estonia, with special attention devoted to the group's media landscape. The thesis then pivots to the discussion over ETV+ and the arguments employed. Following either predominantly domestic (the "Bronze Soldier" riots) or global crises (the annexation of Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine), numerous concerns were raised about Estonia's Russian-speaking community, especially its susceptibility to follow the Russian government-controlled media and therefore the community's challenged loyalty to Estonia. Thus, Russian-speakers were perceived by in Estonian public debate as the group most vulnerable to Russian information warfare. In order to ensure unbiased media coverage, attempts were made to establish a public Russian-language channel in 2007-8. However, these efforts ran short. The state did not opt for a full-scale public Russian-language channel, but limited its support to several commissioned TV shows instead.

In 2014-5, the revived debate over the Russian-language channel coincided with European (2014) and domestic (2015) elections, becoming a topic widely discussed by politicians and candidates. Both proponents and opponents of a TV channel referred to the Ukraine crisis and Russia's hybrid warfare as reasons for or against the channel. Securizing remarks were common within debate, regardless of speaker's ethnicity/language, political or professional affiliation.

The local Russian-speaking community was poorly involved in the early stage of the debate, and its public figures were skeptical over the way and timing the new channel's creation. Several politicians and journalists tried to convince the audience that the new channel was not a means of counter-propaganda. The creation of a channel was above partisan politics, as both the coalition and the opposition mainly were in favor, albeit with different justifications.

This thesis concludes that the securitized debate itself is insufficient to evaluate the channel's perception by the target audience and its subsequent performance. It therefore proposes several other avenues for prospective research.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords
Estonia, media, ethnic minority, securitization, Russian-speakers

Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited

Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisor, assistant professor Dr. Katri Pynnöniemi for her valuable comments and useful suggestions for the following master's thesis.

I am also grateful to numerous professors and lecturers of the Master's Programme in Russian Studies at the University of Helsinki, who have significantly enriched my theoretical and empirical knowledge on several subjects.

I am especially thankful to the director of the programme, Dr. Sari Autio-Sarasmo for her strong support and timely encouragement throughout two-years studies. My fellow students of the program contributed to fruitful discussions during the master's thesis seminar meetings that helped to shape this work.

I wish to thank organizers of workshops and conferences where earlier drafts of this work were presented in 2019: the Fourth Annual Tartu Conference on Russian and East European Studies (Tartu, Estonia), the FIRST Intensive Course (St. Petersburg, Russia), and the 19th Annual Aleksanteri Conference (Helsinki, Finland).

I am also thankful to numerous journalists, scholars and decision-makers in Estonia, who were eager to share their ideas on the topic with me in thought-provoking private discussions. Conversations with assistant professor Dr. Tõnis Saarts and Dr. Igor Kopõtin provided me with enthusiasm to carry out the following research.

And finally, I am extremely grateful to my partner Ms. Anna Tisler for her continuous moral support and insightful comments.

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1. Introduction

In September 2015, a new television channel was launched in Baltic republic of Estonia. A home to 1,3 million people, it has a significant Russian-speaking minority, which is composing around a quarter of country's population. The TV channel called ETV+[1] is a part of state-funded Estonian Public Broadcasting (*ERR*) and was intended for Russian-speaking audience. However unbiased by the law, ETV+ was met with harsh criticism even before it went on air. The lively discussion in traditional and social media, numerous public debates over the necessity, shape, possible formats and other characteristics of the channel foreseeable channel attracted dozens of opinions, expressed by politicians, scholars, media, ethnic integration and security experts, journalists, and numerous other public figures. In this master thesis, I seek to explore the public debate surrounding the launch of ETV+ through the lense of securitization theory.

The securitization theory is a constructivist language-centered approach to security. It shifted a focus of security studies beyond typical military and political materialist actions, extending it to non-military areas, such as economics, culture, environment, etc. According to initial theoretical framework by Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998), some phenomenon becomes a security issue, once called so by an actor. While threats can arise on a wide range of grounds, only making them existential through political action and rhetoric securitizes them. If securitizing move (for instance, a speech act by a politician convincing the voters) is successful, the issue is no longer a political (economic, societal) one, but becomes a security problem. Speech act is thus of bigger importance, than the actual actions.

Another important component of securitization-themed debate is its ethical considerations, since the authors have argued that security-jargoned labeling must be avoided, and social or political issues should be solved without securitizing them, if possible (Wæver, 1999). Based on the theoretical framework the theory provides, the thesis will explore the public debate over state-owned and -funded Russian-speaking TV channel in Estonia. The thesis will study the rhetoric of various actors, expressed in relation to the ETV+ channel and the grounds, on

[1] The name ETV+ has been chosen during the public contest, were people could submit their ideas. The abbreviation ETV stands for Estonian Television (*Eesti Televisioon*), the name that country's most popular Estonian-language TV channel bears since 1955.

which its necessity has been articulated or government's decision to launch a channel was criticized. Analyze of these speech acts will allow to explore, whether the debate has been securitized and to what extent.

Previously, no special attention was given to a security dimension of public debate over the new media channel in Estonia. The current literature on a debate over the channel briefly summarizes *pro et contra* arguments, which are mostly related to the cost, media market situation, operation, content-production (arguments against), or increasing cohesion and state identity, fueling availability of a better-quality information, and decreasing inter-ethnic tensions in the society (arguments in favor). Another important feature includes language argument, as some considered broadening Russian-speaking public broadcasting a tool to reduce a motivation of Russian-speakers to learn Estonian language (Jõesaar, 2017). Another study focuses on the first year activities of the channel, briefly touching the public debate and devoting a special attention to management and content (Uibo, 2016). The latter work also neglects the variety of public debate, as it superficially studies Estonian-language media only. As will be shown later, despite small audience, Estonian media landscape is economically, linguistically and ideologically diverse. It is mentioned that public debate has been polarized and did not follow clearly outlined political trajectory, since skepticism or opposition to the channel was expressed by prominent members of leading political parties despite their ideological position (Parshukov, 2017, pp. 40-41). Young viewers point to the generational difference in perception of the channel, and propose the timing for launch of a channel was bad, as viewers have to choose between extremely polarized ETV+ and Russian TV channels, the Russian-speaking audience is used to (Vaserik, 2016, pp. 33-44).

Various primary studies on the content of the channel are available, focusing on its cross-media features (Balode, 2016), political and social (Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2019) and late-night talk shows (Jakubovits, 2019). It has been noted that ETV+ provides a stage for public figures, often not just confronting with official Estonian positions, but even bringing in those of Kremlin. Local debate becomes even more polarized even within one ethnic-linguistic group, as justification for disappointment in Estonia's language or educational policies moves beyond national borders, and 'the skepticism toward official Estonia's policy of managing inter-ethnic relations often leads to supporting the annexation of Crimea and the Russia-inspired war in Donbas, while anti-Putin stand in its turn is

conducive to the support of Estonia's linguistic and educational policies' (Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2019).

The securitization theory has been utilized in Estonian context by numerous studies. The topics explored include general security in the Baltic region and relevant political discourse (Kaljurand and Mälksoo, 2009), Russia's compatriot policy towards Russian-speakers in Estonia (Gering, 2014), anti-immigration rhetoric in Estonia following global refugee crisis (Täri, 2017), and cyber security (Hansen and Nissenbaum, 2009; Oksaar, 2014). Little attention has been paid to securitization of Russian-speakers in Estonia (Kuczyńska-Zonik, 2017). This leads us to conclusion that further study is needed, in order to discover possible securitization patterns in a public debate, depending on the language, political affiliation, position or other background of the opinion leaders involved. Possible findings may serve as a framework for further analysis of securitization of Russian-speaking population in Estonia or other ethnic minorities elsewhere.

The current master thesis aims at distinguishing the extent to which the public discussion surrounding ETV+ has been securitized in 2007-8 and 2014-5 and what negative consequences it might have had for the perception of a new channel by the target audience. The following research will find out, in which context the discussion over necessity for public Russian-speaking TV channel begun and what arguments were brought into debate. The thesis will explore the main arguments proponents and opponents of the channel used, and what role securizing rhetoric played in them. Also, we will study the context these remarks have been made. While most of the primary material studied is opinion pieces, other samples include statements by the elected politicians in the public office. Also, the analysis of publicly expressed opinions allows to distinguish, whether politicians and journalists themselves belonging to Russian-speaking minority made different word choices and paid attention to other aspects of the channel, if discussing one in Russian language.

One of the phases of the public debate over ETV+ coincided with the campaign period of two elections. First, European Parliament elections were held in May 2014, and parliamentary elections took place the following year in Estonia, which were held on March 1, 2015.[2] As the issue of TV channel was on the agenda during numerous debates between the candidates,

[2] Aside traditional voting day, one third of voters opted for e-voting, the latter taking place on February 19-25, 2015. See Vabariigi Valimiskomisjon 2015 for further details.

this allows to explore whether political parties took clear stand on the issue and what arguments did they use, and how securizing rhetoric corresponded with the ideological position of the party. For the latter purpose, party programmes will be explored, too.[3] The thesis is going to analyze, whether debate had several phases or not, and how it fluctuated over the years. Given the fact the creation of a channel has been obviously influenced by global events, i.e. Russia's activities towards Russian-speaking diasporas in foreign countries and its military action in Ukraine, the debate is also analyzed for the extent, to which speakers referred to affairs beyond Estonian domestic agenda. The latter may include foreign examples of both ethnic minorities vulnerable to propaganda and successful media outlets, funded by the state for them.

The thesis consists of introduction, three chapters and conclusion. The current introduction provides reader with general scope of the work and outlines research hypothesis. Also, a modest overview of existing literature on ETV+ channel is provided. In Section 2, the theoretical framework is described, with special emphasis on existing securitization studies of ethnic minorities within Eastern Europe. Also, the situational context is provided for Estonia's internal situation in 2014-5 and the ways it was perceived globally as an aftermath of Russia's annexation of Crimea. Third section sketches on the current state of Russian-speaking population in Estonia and its media landscape. This enables reader with better understanding of socioeconomic and professional context, in which the new channel emerged. Section 4 provides an empirical study of a public debate over ETV+ in Estonia prior and shortly after its launch, analyzing it within the framework of securitization. The conclusion summarizes the findings of this thesis and outlines possibilities for perspective research. The thesis also contains an abstract, contents, abstract in Estonian and Russian, and the list of literature. If the language of a quotation is other than English, and original word or phrase allows for multiple translations, the original is mentioned within the text or a footnote.

[3] European Parliament elections are different in nature, with candidates mostly presenting their own but party-based programs. Hence, only national election of 2015 is studied in this regard.

2. Securitization

2.1 Who is next beyond Crimea?

In the winter of 2014, the world has found itself a new reality: Ukrainian Crimea peninsula has been occupied by militants without distinctions, who were then called *little green men*. However, Russian Federation involvement in the case was clear and easy to realize. Following the annexation of Crimea a quest for searching new spot of possible Russian invasion has begun. Many authors pointed to Estonian border-city of Narva. The argumentation is obvious: Narva's predominantly Russian-speaking population, geographical position, remarkable amount of those holding Russian citizenship among the city population, and even historical linkages with the Great Northern War (Cowen, 2014; Sander, 2014; Berman, 2014; Ottens, 2014). Unsurprisingly, that given the above-mentioned circumstances, Russian-speaking population of Estonia has been a subject to diverse influence in media, politics, religion and other areas, imposed on them by their historical motherland, or, in other words, Russian soft power alongside various tools of influence. The seminal soft power concept explanation is provided by Joseph Nye (2004), and encompasses a selection of tools of persuasion and co-optation without coercion. All of the above mentioned factors influenced global media and expert community interest in the region, making it a perfect ground either for symbolic cross-river TV coverage or political analysis.

Although some skepticism towards the Estonian government is common to smaller or larger extent with both the local elite in Northeastern Estonia (Eremeyev, 2017) and ordinary residents of the region (Trimbach and O'Lear, 2015), the vast majority of respondents in the various surveys on the subject remain critical of the prospect of joining Russia. Reflections on the potential of Narva becoming the next Russia's target are different in tone and dominated by a restrained description of local life and its comparison with the neighboring city of Ivangorod on the Russian side of the river (Higgins, 2017). Observers tend to suggest the possibility of new forms of war emerging, rather than the traditional invasion (Coffey, 2015; Gnauck, 2017). President Toomas Hendrik Ilves also admitted humorously that the foreign journalist who had gone to Narva to investigate separatism on the ground, has been shouted by the locals, who "do not want to join Russia" (Bahovski, 2016). It has to be

mentioned that Narva and Northeastern Estonia has been already discussed in a similar context for quite a while (Smith and Wilson, 2007) and the question "*Is Narva going to become next Crimea?*" has been negatively responded by Estonian scholars both from social sciences and humanities (Dougherty and Kaljurand, 2015; Kasekamp, 2015). It must be noted, Narva or Estonia were not making headlines in global media in this manner in following years. We suggest it may be attributed to two main factors: decline of global interest corresponding to a decreased number of casualties in war in Donbass, as well as deployment of enhanced NATO forces presence in the Baltics and Poland, agreed in NATO Warsaw summit in July 2016, and operating from 2017 (NATO, 2016).

Nevertheless, the concerns in question would not arise, if there was no consistent action from the Russian side in what Russia considers its 'nearabroad' (*blizhnee zarubezhje*), i.e. former Soviet republics. From 1990s onward, the notion of 'compatriot' (*sootechestvennik*) came into life. The concept is volatile and flexible, and currently is rooted in dozens of Russian official documents, including federal laws, presidential decrees, official statements and reports, foreign and security policy concepts, etc. According to various definitions in those documents, compatriots are the Russian-speakers, who reside abroad and share 'ethnic, cultural, linguistic, political, and even spiritual connotations' with Russia-living Russians (Grigas, 2016, pp. 57-93).

Although it is arguable, which channels are utilized by Russia to introduce its concepts abroad, the main executive agency of Rossotrudnichestvo has been considered rather modest by scholars, when compared to British Council, which has ten times more staff working on promotion of British culture overseas (Rutland and Kazantsev, 2016). According to Agnia Grigas's concept, the Russia's policy towards Russians living in the territory of the former Soviet Union and/or their countries of residence is divided into seven stages: soft power, humanitarian policies, compatriot policies, information warfare, offering passports, protection by military means, and annexation. At the same time, those stages may not occur exactly in that order and scenarios may occur in which only a few of the listed measures are applied. Grigas notes that the application of all seven stages of compatriot policy to the Baltic States is unlikely because it is doubtful that Russia could ever reach the stage of annexation. Nevertheless, these countries' NATO and EU membership does not prevent Russia from

applying other measures, primarily to destabilize the political and economic environment (Grigas *op. cit.*).

Such widened notion of security needs a proper theoretical framework. As shown above, no actual existential threat was posed to Estonia as a whole either part of its territory. Beyond typical biannual military exercise, there was no publicly known actions taken by Russian military or its associated militants against Estonia. Nevertheless, the global media raised numerous concerns over Estonia's perspectives, despite public was not presented with the evidence of possible Russian intervention, except for constant references to situation in several regions of Ukraine and Estonia's Russian-speaking population, as possible sympathizer of such provisional military action. Therefore, nonexistent physical action imposes increased importance at the speech act and political choices behind it.

2.2. Securitization: origins, framework and criticism

In late years of Cold War and a following decade, technological shift and increasing globalization have reshaped the world tremendously. These changes did not fully eliminate military action from power politics, but have forced several stakeholders to bring new definitions of security dimension into a public debate. The securitization theory has been introduced in the 1990s by a group of Danish security scholars Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, colloquially referred to as Copenhagen School of Security Studies. However called a school, they have also worked and published on securitization independently, and in some aspects their understandings and views may be different from each other. According to authors of the theory, its main imperative derived from a wish to find a framework within a wider debate on what is to be considered security. Simplified, two main opposing categories may be distinguished. The first of these approaches can be summarized as a conservative one: security is subject to a military action, involving application and resulting in casualties of rival's forces or infrastructure. The other cohort, on the contrary, insisted on a widening of definition. Thus, security label could be attributed to various phenomena beyond classical military action.

With theory initially sketched in late 1980s (Wæver, 1989), the new comprehensive framework was introduced in a titular book (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde, 1998) as a tool,

allowing to distinguish what is *security* and in what terms one can be scrutinized. Ever since, the theory has been applied to a wide range of matters, ranging from AIDS (Elbe, 2006) to cyber security (Hansen and Nissenbaum, 2009). At the time the core ideas of securitization theory were shaped, academic debate in the field focused on widening security matters particularly but not limited to economy and environment (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde 1998, pp. 1-15).

Copenhagen School postulates that they approach security through *national security* discourse and in most cases the actors are state-related: "By uttering 'security', a state representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it" (Wæver 1995, p. 55). In their understanding a term *security* has different meanings, depending on a referent object it is defined in relation to. Security becomes more complex, as threats may arise from anywhere, not limited to states or other human actors. However, the important feature of security is the emphasis on existential considerations behind it. Thus, different threats apply in various fields. As for political sector, they point out that 'sovereignty can be existentially threatened by anything that questions recognition, legitimacy, or governing authority' (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde 1998, p. 22). Security is a shift from a usual and "normal" status, which takes place when an issue is treated in a special way and is being prioritized compared to other matters on stake. The latter may appear through extreme politicization, accompanied by broader attention to policy-making or increased government spending. Such prioritization, however, does not need to necessarily correspond to a real threat. It may arise in a situation without actual threat, but nevertheless may end up being presented as such. Thus, security is self-referential, since existential threat can be both real and imaginable. Scholars distinguish between securitization and *securitizing move*. Securitization only applies, if accepted by the referent audience. However, acceptance is a broad term and varies significantly based on the political or cultural context. Unless there is no signs of existential threat (or rhetoric on the matter), then one may speak only of the *securitizing move*. Therefore, securitization is a combination of reshaping the normal situation, once it is also legitimized by the audience, who accepts the proposed extraordinarily actions (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde 1998, pp. 24-6).

Hence, the theory argues that some phenomenon becomes a security issue, once called so by an actor. Those threats that are labelled existential become such through a speech act by an

actor. If speech act (for instance, a politician convincing the voters) is successful, the issue is no longer a political (e.g. economic, societal) one, but becomes a security problem (Wæver, 2004, p. 13). Speech act is thus of bigger importance, than the actual actions. As the leading proponent and author of a theory Ole Wæver puts it, 'the structure of securitization theory is organized around securitization as an act, as a productive moment, as a discontinuous reconfiguration of a social state' (2011).

General criticism towards the theory proposed by Copenhagen School can be divided into two bigger groups: its application and the methodology related to the very speech act (see Villumsen Berling, 2011, for the overview of extensive theoretical debate on the latter). Numerous concerns over applicability include those for instance related to racism (Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2020) or gender issues (Hansen, 2000), or political and ethical considerations (Eriksson, 1999; Huysmans, 2006), as well as their interplay (Huysmans, 1998; Gad and Petersen, 2011). Also, at the core of the theory lies an assumption that securitization takes place, when extraordinary measures are imposed. Such approach is viable for western liberal democracies with established rule of law, as shift from “normal” is clearly visible and can in one way or another be perceived by the population. On the contrary, the theoretical framework may not be fully applicable in a case of a more hybrid regime such as Turkey (Bilgin, 2011) or one in transition, as was Kyrgyzstan in 2000s (Wilkinson, 2007). Additionally, several other matters must be considered, if applying theory to the country or territory where regular combating takes place (Olesker, 2014; Stritzel and Chang, 2015).

The theory has also been noted for its almost unlimited possibilities to define any matter as *security* (Roe, 2004) contrary to early works of Copenhagen School, which limited security to five dimensions only (Buzan, 1991). If there is only a need for a speech act, the notion of security becomes loosely defined and may be applied almost anywhere. This was taken into account, as Wæver argues for decrease of such word (and following policy-making) choices, and poses a straightforward question: 'why do you call this a security issue?' (1999). Hence, such labeling must be avoided, and social or political issues should be solved without securitizing them, if possible.

2.3. Securitization of ethnic minorities

Among other topics, religious (Jamil, 2016) and ethnic minorities (Roe, 2004) have been a subject of securitization theory application. An article by Paul Roe (2004) outlines the problem of desecuritization of ethnic minorities, which the author considers hardly possible. While ethnic minority typically to certain extent deals with its own identity and maintaining it is a security-related matter, it poses certain risks for securitizing them both from inside and outside *per se*. Roe also elaborates on a level of (de-)securizing, stating that desecuritization is possible for an individual, but hardly imaginable for a group. Since the language used to define minority vs. majority dichotomy is inevitably distinctive, desecuritization of those might be almost impossible: not using such language will jeopardize opportunities for definition of what minority. Securitization also leads to minority confronting it, as it is perceived as a threat to minority's integrity. Deconstruction of a group to a smaller entities or personal level is also somewhat impossible, as this will almost diminish the minority itself (Roe, 2004).

Ethnic minorities in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe especially risk being tackled through the lense of security (Kymlicka, 2001). Partially, this can be attributed to the nature of these states, which (re-)gained their sovereignty following the Communist regimes breakdown in the recent 30 years. Perhaps, nation-building and transition to democracy and market economy may have lead to more aggressive language usage and policy choices towards minorities. Also, there is significant empirical evidence suggesting that broader political discussion over minority rights in Central and Eastern Europe is bounded by nation states fears of possible secession (Kymlicka, 2001, cited in Roe, 2004).

Roe's argument has been overturned by Matti Jutila, who suggested deconstructivist approach to the issue of minorities' securitization, predominantly based on Copenhagen School's concepts of social security, supported by Brubaker's take on *nationalizing* nationalism (Jutila, 2006). The latter refers to dubious success of nation building in weak nation states, probably mostly situated in the region in question. In such states, the efforts to establish a proper nation state run short, and cause even more vulnerability to the titular nation, undermining its attitude vis-a-vis minorities (Brubaker, 1996). However, such policy-making is enhancing minority identity, as the one builds upon against titular nation's

efforts to challenge the rights of a minority and assimilate it. Jutila proposes a solution based on building a mutually acceptable new narratives, bringing more minority-initiated political discourse change into public debate. If existential threat is removed from political language, there will be no need to securitize the minority issue, he concludes (Jutila *op. cit.*).

While illustrating his argument, Jutila also carefully asserts that the situation in regard to Russian-speakers rights in Estonia has improved in late 1990s and early 2000s, with inter-ethnic difficulties still persisting in a society, but desecuritization discourse gaining momentum (Jutila, 2006). In part, this can probably be attributed to the country's efforts to meet criteria for EU accession, and therefore need to alleviate some of the minority-related legislation. Also, this thesis tackles period between 2007 and 2015, while previous successes have been diminished at large due to several sociopolitical changes. Roe, however, is critical of Jutila's idea and finds it hardly viable in Central and Eastern European context. He emphasizes importance of reasonable management of minority rights, by which one can "reduce, or even effectively rule out, the recourse to emergency politics". Another option to desecuritize proposed by Roe is certain extent of assimilation based on mutual acceptance, which still allows for distinctiveness and preservation of minority's identity (Roe, 2006). While both authors argue for desecuritization of ethnic minorities, they mostly do not refer to particular country. Various concepts can meet different levels of success in case of implementation ranging from country to country even within one region of Central and Eastern Europe due to a range of historical, demographical, linguistic and other possible reasons.

In total, securitization theory has arised and later rose to prominence in the era following the fall of bilateral global security. Although it still mostly focuses on a state and its actions, it also allows for other actors to be studied. Copenhagen school remarkably contributes to debate on widening the very notion of *security*, bringing new forms of security into life, i.e. econome, environment, etc. According to the theory, securitization can be identified, when there is as a speech act, referring to an audience. In the above mentioned example, the Estonia's sovereignty and territorial integrity was a referent object, and global media was securitizing actor. While there was extensive rhetoric on security-related matters by

securitizing actor, but no evident existential threat was posed to referent object, the whole process was limited to securitizing move only.

The following chapters will seek an answer to the question in which way Russian-speaking minority in Estonia has been perceived by titular population within "abnormal" situation of 2007 (so-called Bronze soldier crisis) and following 2014 (the year Russia annexed Crimea and kicked off military action in Eastern Ukraine). In order to apply the theory as main analytical tool, I will first describe the context: one of the preconditions outlined by Copenhagen School is a shift from 'normal' to unprecedented, when more harsh, extreme or costly policy-making is justified and accepted. Therefore, I will explore the context of events in 2007 and 2014-5: how they were perceived in Estonia, what influenced the general understanding of the events and whether or not there was an existential threat to country's existence or well-being. Special attention should be devoted to the role and status of Russian-speaking community in these discussions.

Once the situational context has been provided, I will focus on the channel-themed discussion. In order to distinguish between the extent to which the minority issue was politicized or even securitized, I will examine the public debate surrounding the media landscape and explore arguments of those discussing state-funded media for Russian-speaking minority of Estonia in terms of security. As described theory puts forward speech act as the main element of the securitization process, I will focus on publicly expressed opinions, using basic discourse analysis methodology (mostly based on Gee, 2018). Main characteristics to be emphasized are the language choice, speaker's status, context or source (op-ed in a newspaper, official statement, policy brief, etc.), and previous experience of a speaker with media issues and their political background.

3. Situational context

3.1. Russian-speakers in Estonia: from aliens to dialogue partners

During turbulent events of late 1980s-early 1990s some of the more conservative layers of Estonian society might have seriously believed that Russian-speaking people who came here or were born here in the Soviet era, will move (back) to Russia (Hughes, 2005). This was clearly influenced by rhetoric on the preservation of national identity, as population composition has changed drastically under the Soviet rule, with Eastern slavic nations making up a half of the country‘s population (Brubaker, 2011). Especially during Perestroika and in first decade following restoration of independence, the national sovereignty was tied with ethnic anti-Russian sentiment and strong concerns about situation of Estonian language in public sphere (Velmet, 2019). We can now see that the vast majority of them have stayed and live their *own* lives here. It is precisely *their* life: the education system is largely separate, the settlement in the peripheral districts of Tallinn and socioeconomically declining industrial north-eastern Estonia seems to be extraneous or exotic to most Estonians. There are large gaps in the labor market between the ethnic groups, and the presence of non-Estonians in public service remains within the bounds of statistical error, inter-ethnic friendship or family are rarely the case. Russian-speakers have their own cultural life, and *en masse* vote for the same political party, though not exclusively Russian in its leadership (Kaldur and Vetik, 2017; Ivanov, 2015; Kallaste, 2018; Lindemann and Saar, 2012; Tammaru *et. al.,* 2013).

Currently, Estonia is a home to approximately 905 000 Estonians, 330 000 Russians, 23 000 Ukrainians and 12 000 Belorussians. Most of the people belonging to Slavic ethnic minorities, alongside with minor groups as Tatars or Jews (~2000 each) can be conventionally labelled as Russian-speaking, as it is their primary language of communication in daily life, regardless their ethnicity (Statistikaamet, 2019; Verschik, 2005). This is due education system, social networks of people, media outlets and daily facilities and services by both government and business are to huge extent offered in Russian language alongside official Estonian. From mid-1990s onward, Estonia has had exclusionary citizenship policy: after the collapse of USSR Estonian citizenship was granted to those, whose ancestors lived in interwar Estonia. Such approach was motivated by security

considerations and strong ethnic-political polarization that was present in a society of this Baltic country at the eve of the Soviet Union and in the 1990s (Vetik, 2011). Thus, newly developed system excluded Soviet-era migrants and their heirs, leaving them with two options: either obtain Estonian or any other citizenship, or become a stateless person, with a line "alien passport" on the cover of a document. Daily life limitations include number of professions one could not occupy if not being country's national (mostly in government, but not limited to), active political rights on the local level only, and different visa regulations in foreign countries. After the initial introduction of citizenship-themed legislation in early 1990s, it has also imposed several limitations on economic activity, which were abandoned later (Andersen, 2007). In order to naturalize, one has to undertake tests on language skills and ability to understand the Constitution. While most of the Russian-speakers opted for Estonian citizenship, many (predominantly, elderly), remained stateless, with their share in population declining year by year. Also, minor amount of Russian-speaking population obtained citizenship without naturalization, either having ancestors in Estonia before 1940, or receiving it for special services to the country and on other exceptional grounds. Amount of updates introduced in recent decades, also enabled citizenship for Estonian-born adolescents under 18, regardless their parental citizenship(s). Currently, there are approximately 160 000 naturalized Estonian citizen, and 72 000 non-citizens (Siseministeerium, 2019).

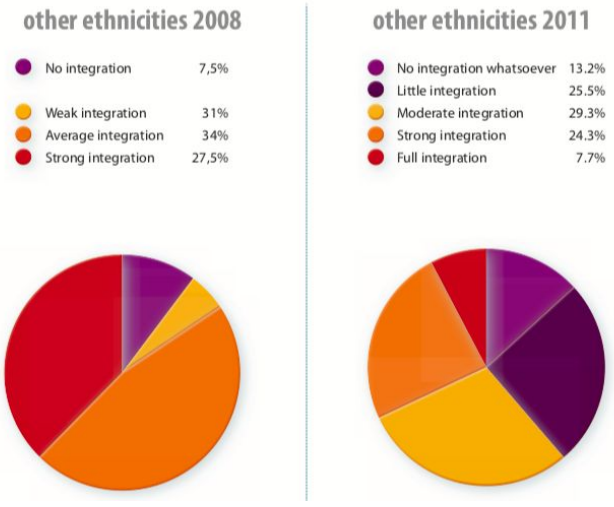

Figure 1. Breakdown of respondents of other ethnicities according to the level of integration index in 2008 and 2011. Source: Integration monitoring 2011, Ministry of Culture of Estonia.

Even from a superficial statistics one can conclude that there must be different identities amongst the group, which is not as homogenous as it may seem to outsider due to its size, heritage and current state of affairs. In 2011, one of the leading the inter-ethnic process researchers in Estonia, professor Marju Lauristin proposed in a regular study commissioned by the Ministry of Culture, Russophones can be divided into several groups according to their identity and language skills. According to her study, share of those strongly or fully integrated to Estonian society numbered up to one third of Russian-speaking population (Lauristin, 2011; see Figure 1). Lauristin herself did not participate in following years Integration monitoring research group. Thus, such categorizations are not fully applicable to the study of 2015, since it was conducted using different methodology. One of the components scholars tackled in the abovementioned study was media choices and trust towards various sources of information. While typical person follows several media outlets, Russian TV channels especially dominated the landscape for the least integrated groups.

National strategic documents on integration policies have shifted their focus from language learning to the matters such as identity, culture, cohesion, and socioeconomic prosperity (Arengukava "Lõimuv Eesti 2020", 2014). In February 2014, president of the Republic of Estonia Toomas Hendrik Ilves was presenting a Russian edition of his speeches collection at one of the oldest Russian-speaking schools of capital city of Tallinn. Asked by a moderator, whether he can say something in Russian himself, Swedish-born and American-raised Ilves turned directly to the audience full of highschoolers and slowly pronounced: *ia vash prezident* [I am your president]. School students reacted enthusiastically (Taklaja, 2014). Perhaps, they were not aware of the fact that some years ago president Ilves has provoked a domestic and international controversy, stating using Russian language by president of Estonia would demonstrate an acceptance of Soviet occupation of the country in 1944-91 (Whewell, 2008). Six years later, first female president of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid went beyond Ilves' linguistic achievements on Russian front, and delivered a 15-minute speech at the local conference TEDxLasnamäe, predominantly attended by youth Russian-speakers from Tallinn. Language or ethnicity are not the most crucial components of success in a modern Estonian society or worldwide, while education, hard work and determination are the key for the future prosperity, she argued (Vabariigi Presidendi Kantselei, 2018).

Such a symbolic shift is symptomatic, as it did not only legitimate occasional usage of Russian language by the heads of state, but also demonstrated their openness for a dialogue in a completely new framework. Understanding that the message in Russian is more efficient than this delivered in Estonian, heads of state experimented in bridging the gaps with country's Russian-speakers. Youth or youngsters still can learn the language and contribute to Estonia's success, was their message. Also, speeches took place in the high school with Russian language of curriculum and at the conference held in predominantly Russian-speaking neighbourhood of Tallinn. Entering other's symbolic territory and switching to other's language by the heads of state was a welcoming gesture, among many others undertaken in recent years by the state. For instance, number of public relations officers, specializing on Russian-speaking media, has significantly increased in several ministries and governmental agencies from 2014 onward, with the government and numerous others themselves launching Russian-language accounts on social media. The latter has not gained sufficient popularity and remains questionable in terms of efficiency when providing Russian-speakers with crucial information (Lavrentjev, 2018). Such approach overcomes the officially proclaimed conservative and Estonian-centered language policies, as Russian is nowadays widely present even in governmental communications, shifting from old-fashioned rhetoric to pragmatic needs of informing the people (Berezkina, 2017; Adamson and Tshuikina, 2015).

Estonian partisan system has followed pattern typical for the region, as divide between anti-communist stance and certain nostalgia towards Soviet past has coincided with ethnic boundaries (Duvold, 2015, cited in Saarts, 2016). Founded to counter Estonia’s efforts for regaining independence in late 1980s, the Intermovement (International Movement of Workers in the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, *Interdvizhenie*) has later split into several ethnic-centered minor political parties. While some of them entered the national parliament Riigikogu in the 1990s, they were not sustainable. The reasons are twofold: small number of Estonian citizens of Russian origin in early 1990s to attract as voters, as well as constant inability to reach a long-lasting strategic union between number of little political forces (Saarts, 2016). In 2000s, socioliberal Center Party managed to attract Russian-speakers with their leftist agenda on social issues and pronounced opposition to nationalistic rhetoric of other political actors. Center Party recruited several Russian-speaking public figures, who

successfully rose to prominence at municipal level and won local elections in most of Ida-Viru towns, as well as cemented its power in Tallinn under leadership of mayor and party leader Edgar Savisaar for several election cycles. In 2000-10s, Center Party was supported by 70-85% of Estonian Russian-speakers (Saarts, 2015). With strong power in Tallinn, Center Party deployed a large media network funded by nation's capital budget. It included two free newspapers (in Estonian and Russian), as well as Tallinn TV broadcasting in Estonian. For Russian-speakers, from 2008 onwards city of Tallinn commissioned several TV shows from privately owned PBK channel. The latter has been subject to critique from both political opponents and media experts, as Center Party politicians prevailed in the shows others were given little or no opportunity to share their opinion (ERR News, 2020).

3.2. Russian-speaking media landscape

Russian media in Estonia has a long and captivating history, dating back almost for two centuries. Scholars consider modern-day Russian media in Estonia a minority media, as it is both produced and consumed by the members of local diaspora (Vihalemm and Jakobson, 2011). The very first local regular magazine in Russian was published in the Governorate of Estonia in 1832 (Titov, 2012). Although, local diaspora numbered approximately to 90 000 Russians in interwar independent Republic of Estonia, the number of publications has significantly increased and according to different estimates reached 100-130. However, many of those newspapers and magazines experienced financial troubles, and due to harsh rivalry and relatively reluctant welcome from the audience existed for a short period of time (Issakov, 2011, pp. 31-32). In Soviet and post-Soviet Estonia, numerous newspapers and magazines were published in Russian, showing signs of decline in variety and circulation figures from 1990s onward. In 2010s, the national printed outlets in Russian included two general interest daily newspapers, two weekly newspapers, one business-themed newspaper, aside numerous local publications or those, focusing on issues such as culture and lifestyle (Titov, 2012).

In 1958, first radio and TV broadcasts in Russian were launched in occupied Soviet Estonia alongside channels and shows in Estonian. Following the restoration of independence in

1991, these media assets were transformed into Estonian Television and Estonian Radio respectively, to be merged into a corporation under the name of the Estonian Public Broadcasting or ERR (from Estonian *Eesti Rahvusringhääling*) in 2007, which later also entered the web-based news production (ERR, 2017). The Parliament passed relevant law, which among other things stated that ERR's duty is to 'broadcast programs <...> that meet the information needs of all groups of the population, including minorities' (Riigiteataja, 2007).

Under the ERR, *Raadio 4* station has been broadcasting for Russian-speakers since 1993 onward, providing a wide selection of shows on the topics ranging from social issues to politics, and enjoying warm welcome among its audience. Competing with two or three privately owned stations, which are focused on music and lifestyle rather than political and cultural life, *Raadio 4* saw a huge backlash in its coverage numbers in the wake of coverage of events in Ukraine in 2014. Over a year, the share dropped from 15,7% to 13,11%, resulting in 30 000 listeners abandoning the station. Experts stated rather one-sided coverage of the war and Crimean occupation as a reason, since official Russia's positions were almost fully neglected in both the news and political shows. While journalists did not express any criticism over anyone limiting their freedom in editorial policy, one may presume the audience just did not enjoy the expected amount of opinions shared by Moscow officials. The ERR leadership admitted the problem, but also remarked that decline may derive from private stations' rivalry (Paris, 2014).

First considerable online media outlets in Estonia begun operating in early 2000s (Balčytienė and Harro-Loit, 2009). In 2010s, main online news outlets in Russian included two big websites owned by main private players in Estonian market, and their minor counterpart run by ERR. There were numerous attempts to launch independent news publications, but they did not survive due to economic reasons. Several topical or lifestyle websites and platforms operate as well. Three resources, directly linked to or controlled by the Russian government and its local adepts exist as well, but have not gained remarkable popularity among the audience. For instance, local edition of Sputnik had 252 thousands visitors in May 2017, compared to 2,6 million of Russian-speaking Postimees web at the same month. Also, if privately owned popular Russian-speaking media is predominantly read by locals, Russia-backed news websites attract larger share of their audience from Russia (Propastop, 2017). Outlets that are generally labeled as propaganda, have also experienced legal troubles

with some of their executives forging the documents (Kaitsepolitsei 2016, p. 9; Kaitsepolitsei 2014, pp. 8-9; Roonemaa, 2018).

Estonian TV scene has been perhaps even more diverse than above-mentioned other types of media. During the period from 1991 onward, the public broadcasting has always had a newscast, airing once or twice a day in the evening prime-time. In 2000s and early 2010s, several attempts were made to launch political talk shows to be aired at the second program of national television, i.e. ETV2. Due to unstable funding they never lasted longer than two-three seasons. Numerous minor privately owned channels have been operating in Russian since 1992 (Titov, 2012), but their share has never been remarkable, as none of these appeared in daily share rankings in 2010s. Due to several legal, financial and professional limitations, local privately owned Russian-speaking TV stations were not able to produce full programm, mostly limiting their broadcasting to one-two hours a day (Jõesaar, 2014a). The TV market has been dominated by channels of Russian origin, which had either additional locally produced shows or only locally-suited adverts. These channels are mostly registered within one of the EU states, although their main content comes directly from Russia. The extent to which Russian TV stations has been transferred under control of Kremlin-related oligarchs is well-described phenomenon (Ostrovsky, 2015, pp. 228-303; Azhgikhina, 2007).

Kanal	Jaanuar	Veebruar	Märts	Aprill	Mai	Juuni	Juuli	August	September
ETV	15.6	19.7	16.7	14.7	16.4	13.1	12.3	12.6	16.5
Kanal 2	15.1	14.1	16.3	17.2	15.8	14.5	14.8	14.8	16.2
TV3	10.8	10.6	11.8	12.3	10.8	11.0	10.8	9.1	9.9
Kanal 11	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.3	2.3
PBK	5.8	5.6	5.6	5.1	6.0	6.0	6.5	6.1	5.8
RTR Planeta	5.1	4.8	4.4	4.2	5.0	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.1
NTV Mir	4.7	4.9	4.7	5.1	5.0	5.9	5.3	5.9	5.5
TV6	2.2	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.6	2.2	2.3
ETV2	3.3	3.2	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.8	2.6	2.8	2.7
3+	1.9	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.8	2.1	1.8	1.8	1.8
Ren TV Estonia	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.8	2.0	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.5

Figure 2. Aggregated daily shares (%) of TV channels in Estonia in January-September of 2015, Kantar-Emor.

The leading TV station among Russian-speakers in Estonia is *PBK* (abbr. from *Pervyi Baltiyski Kanal* [First Baltic Channel]), operated by local media executives. Aside Russian content produced for the *Channel One*[4], it runs several locally produced shows and a local daily newscast, following daily *Vremya*. While newscast's funding comes from advertising

[4] Owned by the Federal Agency for State Property Management, National Media Group, and VTB Capital.

income, other shows are directly ordered by Tallinn city, making up 29% of this enterprise's revenue in 2015 (Koorits, 2018). In addition to *PBK*, other popular channels of Russian origin include *RTR Planeta*[5], NTV Mir (global edition of *NTV*) and Ren TV Estonia[6]. Daily share of PBK, RTR Planeta and NTV Mir almost equals at 4-7%, while Ren TV lags behind with less than 2% (Figure 2).

As one can conclude from such explicitly diverse media landscape, local Russian-speakers enjoy wide selection of any media type. Reservations can be expressed in regard to print media, which is giving its niche to more accessible, responsive, and mostly free online outlets. Both print and online are *en masse* owned by Estonian corporations or local municipalities, with exceptions of propagandistic nature staying unpopular. Radio scene is stable, with the leading station being part of national public broadcasting, which sometimes might be challenged by privately owned music-centred counterparts. All of the popular TV stations broadcasting in Russian are locally branded editions of popular TV channels, owned by Russian state or closely affiliated businesses. All of these have little or no Estonia-produced content. As people consume media of different kind, it can be argued that local Russian-speakers are able to receive information from sources of different political or national affiliation, demanding better analytical skills from the audience in order to distinguish between often contrasting narratives. According to survey data, in 2015 74% of non-Estonians considered Russia's channels and PBK's local newscast either very or relatively important sources of information. Social media, Radio 4, and Estonia-produced Russian-speaking newspapers and websites all placed within the same category with their importance admitted by 40-50% of respondents (Sepper, 2015).

[5] Global edition of Russia channel owned by the VGTRK holding.
[6] Locally-suited only by its name, but not the content edition of Ren TV owned by the National Media Group.

4. Discussion

4.1. 2007-8: the Bronze Soldier and History

Estonia may be characterized as a peaceful society: political manifestations has always been reserved and never attained a certain degree of violence between protesters and authorities. Even during turbulent events of 1987-91, the independence was regained without human casualties, contrary to that of Lithuania or Latvia. However, one exception still prevails for re-independent country: late April 2007, or the so-called Bronze soldier crisis.

Estonia has been noted for debates over its past, especially concerning World War II and Stalinist repressions in the 1940s. Mostly, juxtaposing ethnic communities of Estonians and local Russians share completely opposing views on these events, with most of Estonians perceiving the country's occupation by the Soviets the worst period in the 20th century. The local Russian community, on the contrary, often falls in line with official Moscow interpretation and perceives 1940 occupation as 'voluntary' accession to the USSR, and 1944 as deliberation from Nazis. Hence, Soviet/Russian Victory day on 9th of May is of big importance for local Russian-speakers and so are the related rituals and sites, increasingly promoted by Russian authorities in recent decades. One of a symbols for the beginning of Soviet occupation of 1944 is associated with reburial of a dozen Soviet soldiers in 1947 to the center of Tallinn. The statue of mourning Soviet soldier was erected the same year and eternal flame worked at the site from 1964 to 1995. Over the years, clashes between the two ethnic groups rose in the society and the statue was framed as identity threat for Estonian public. Following parliamentary elections in 2007, the newly appointed government lead by Reform Party promised to remove the statue. This resulted in big anti-governmentally minded riots with almost 1500 participants, 200 of whom ended up being arrested and one got killed in an accident.[7] The statue was removed to the military cemetery and ethnic communities became way more antagonized than they used to be ever before in Estonian recent history (Ehala, 2009; Brüggemann and Kasekamp, 2008; Bernauer, 2015, pp. 82-84).

[7] The person was killed in a clash with some other civilians, not the police forces. 10 years later, the police dismissed the case as unsolved.

Estonian government has raised concerns over the need to properly inform local Russian-speakers for years, as differences in media landscapes were evident as early as in 1991 (Iushkin, 2016, p. 148). The intense coverage of the whole process surrounding the Bronze soldier crisis in Estonian, local Russian-speaking, Russian, and global media led to even bigger inter-ethnic polarization, also supported by decline in Estonian-Russian trade and resulting in cyber-attacks on Estonian private and governmental websites. The debate over failed national integration policy for Russian-speaking minority intensified amid Bronze Soldier crisis. One of the elements rightly pointed out by numerous experts was the media, and so discussion over necessity of a governmentally funded TV channel on the basis of National Broadcasting (*ERR*) begun.

Initial idea that government came up with, was a TV channel in Russian, operating in early May 2007 under ETV for a short period of time. TV executive called the plan 'Victory Day channel', as the one was intended to go on air around May 9 (Kaio, 2007, pp. 12-13), the Victory Day in Great patriotic war celebrated in Russia and several countries of CIS. At the time, government feared that second stage of riots around the Bronze Soldier statue may follow by the Victory Day. However technical preparations were made, temporary channel never made it to the screen. Neither any new riots happened in early May: the government officially payed a visit to a new site of the statue on May 8. Thus, discussion over other long-run options to sufficiently inform Russian-speakers were evaluated. Main solutions proposed by politicians or experts included a completely new TV channel under ERR, ordering content and showing it on a privately-owned TV channels, or even establishing a multilingual newspaper as part of ERR. Among other options, parliament member and social democrat Marianne Mikko suggested that instead founding a new channel, national budget could ensure Russian subtitles for ETV, so Russian-speakers could easily follow other shows in addition to the already existing daily newscast in Russian. Linguist Mart Rannut smashed the suggestion, saying that subtitles should be in Estonian. This helps to understand and improve little-known language, which Estonian is for local Russian minority, he argued. Rannut also made a joke that 'giving every viewer a million [kroons] could be cheaper, than establishing a new channel' (Rannut, 2007, p. 4), which shows explicitly that no clear understanding about the actual possible cost was indicated at early stage.

Although some concerns were raised over unclear but presumably high channel operation costs, it was turned down by sociologist professor Marju Lauristin. Discussing new integration-themed research at the parliament, Lauristin quoted her anonymous colleague, who said that running a TV channel will probably cost the budget as much as buying two armoured fighting vehicles (AFV). Which one is priority for Estonian security, Lauristin rhetorically asked (Lauristin, 2008). Despite slightly inaccurate estimate, the metaphor demonstrates that discussing inter-ethnic integration at the national legislature, Lauristin opted for framing a channel as a means of security, directly comparing it with the military equipment. In this particular case, the parliament was an audience, with sociologist Lauristin acting as a securitizing agent, speaking on a behalf of scientific community. While AFVs are used in the military and are clearly intended to ensure national security from external threats, their comparison to a local Russian-speaking channel is slightly misleading. The channel would ensure local Russian-speaking community is 'properly' informed about Estonian news, making it a referent object. In a broader sense, we may think of a whole Estonian society as a referent object, since its cohesion and better inter-ethnic understanding would be ensured through Estonia-originated media.

During the seminar on infowars, media analyst Raul Rebane stated the crisis has shown that both Western (probably, mostly meaning English-speaking) and Russian media have big influence on Estonia. According to Rebane, Estonia is situated in the middle of information war, fueled from both sides. Thus, Estonia is under media-initiated crossfire (Trofimov, 2007, p. 5). Such approach fully neglects the role of local media, let it be in Estonian or Russian language. However, in 2007 or any other recent year local media landscape clearly was not limited to Russian sources only, with various other outlets available in Russian language and followed by the minority. Also, it is difficult to imagine a person that only follows the news of his country of residence through the lens of several other countries/cultures. According to the studies conducted at the time, remarkable 74% of Russian-speakers felt they were well-informed about developments in Estonia, while only 28% regularly followed Estonian TV (Vihalemm, 2008). Despite war-themed vocabulary, Rebane's remarks are not clearly indicating the existential threat.

Perhaps, understanding of Estonia under crossfire or permanent civilizational conflict is true in a bigger philosophical dimension, and leads as to seminal theory of Huntington (2002, pp. 21-29) or recalls the connotations of World War II, where Estonian men were drafted to both Red Army and Wehrmacht, but never fought in Estonian uniform. The World War II topics are also intertwined with the way Russian media perceives and covers it. Mart Rannut noted that in September 2007 ETV showed a popular history show in Russian entitled 'Positive Narva', in which 1944 was indicated as a Soviet deliberation year (Rannut, 2007, p. 4). Such loose interpretations of history in the same year following Bronze Soldier crisis, have been perceived unacceptable by many Estonian intellectuals. This commentary indicates that instead of allowing journalists and editors do whatever they want, even the discussion over possible channel's content has been marked by topics of only one 'right' historical memory.

Public debate over necessity of a Russian-speaking channel intensified during Bronze Soldier crisis. Estonian government was so desperate to sufficiently inform local Russian-speaking minority that they even considered running a temporary TV channel in Russian for the possible second wave of the riots. While most of the public discussion focused on financial issues, numerous experts articulated for creation of the channel, using military jargon, referring to ongoing information war between West (Europe in general and Estonia) and East (Russia), or even searching for connotations and arguments in Estonian experience of World War II. The latter was especially tragic, as country not only suffer human and infrastructure war casualties, but also lost its independence and experienced extreme Soviet repressions.

Some elements of Bronze Soldier crisis (primarily, unprecedented riots, but also cyber attacks) has been perceived as existential threat to Estonia's existence and sovereignty, thus, making Estonia (its legitimate government, society and country's understandings of its historical heritage) referent object in Copenhagen school terms. It is hard to determine, whether Russia was the only source of such threat (biased media coverage, alleged cyber attacks), or it was particular individuals of local Russian-speaking community (who facilitated protests, eventually turning into riots).[8]

[8] Four individuals were charged with organization of the riots, but the court found them innocent next year. Soon, three out of four left the country for Russia.

4.2. 2007-8: Temporary Solutions

Without national channel in Russian, local Russian-speakers will be left in 'media space run by Kremlin-backed TV channels', said ERR board member and conservative politician Andres Herkel, a parliament member from IRL. Member of liberal Reform party, minister of culture Laine Jänes had no clear vision of the channel, but promised it will focus on culture-themed content (Rannamäe, 2007, p. 6). Margus Allikmaa, the CEO of ERR was skeptical over perspective of a full channel operating in Russian, and praised temporary funding for particular shows as a solution. The cost- and content-centered debate of 2007 spring about Russian-speaking media was so much intensified that Allikmaa proposed to wait for another year until we could 'come back and make our final decisions' on the matter of a new channel. At the end of the day, closing down the whole channel if unsuccessful will be way more complicated task than concluding production of a single talk-show, he argued (Tarand, 2007, p. 13).

Over the time, unclarity remained, and instead of focusing on either Russian-speaking channel or something else, politicians described it as 'multicultural' channel. The ERR calculations indicated a need for approximately 50 million kroons of additional funding to launch ETV2 in 2008. While government struggled with allocating proper funding, ERR turned directly to the parliament. In a letter sent to the Cultural Affairs Committee, head of ERR board Andres Jõesaar advocated for the funding, asserting that currently 'part of foreign TV channels provide disinformation and undermine the foundations of our country' (Kalamees, 2007, p. 7). Such rhetoric is a perfect example of securitizing move, since Jõesaar is clear about threat (foreign, i.e. Russian TV channels), and referent object (Estonia and its 'foundations'), advocating for extra policy-making and funding, to be provided by the audience (government and/or parliament). By the end of 2007, media reported that all leading political parties have expressed their support for a new channel, but argue about its funding (Poom, 2007, p. 4). After intense political debate over the funding and technical preparations, ETV2 went on air in mid-April 2008 as a test channel, initially broadcasting only 6 hours a day (Linkgreim, 2008). In summer 2008, ETV2 broadcasted Beijing Olympics, and mostly focused on youth, culture or films in the spare time.

At the same time, minister of population and ethnic affairs, social democrat Urve Palo ordered a series of talk shows for Russian-speakers from privately owned PBK channel. ERR ethics advisor Tarmu Tammerk criticized the move, urging to stop such practices, as they create an unprecedented situation, where government directly controls the content of a TV show. He concluded: 'misunderstandings over commissioning talk shows in Russian language foremost demonstrate that the government has no clear plan for media policy at all' (Tammerk, 2008). Shows in Russian language came to ETV2 in early 2009, and in part were funded by European Union mechanisms through national Integration Foundation, which determined their temporary nature. Such temporary project-based funding did not ensure change of habits among the viewers, and all projects of this kind ceased to exist over a year or two. At the same time, ERR launched web news site in Russian, novosti.err.ee. Although good in quality, one appeared later than its private counterparts, which complicated attracting the readers.

Over 2007-8, numerous politicians and experts expressed their support for the channel, while some of them still being hostile about its perspectives to gain popularity with Russian-speaking audience due to a wide range of reasons, mostly limited to lack of professionals, probably leading to a poor quality of production compared to Russian channels.

Although the TV channel, subsequently named ETV2, was in part intended for Russian-speaking minority, Estonian politicians nor expert community did not interact with it as an audience. Several politicians and experts securitized Estonia's wellbeing and sovereignty through their speech acts, arguing that referent object is under the threat. As shown, it was mostly experts and media executives trying to convince policy-makers in necessity of a channel. Thus, most of the parliament members are the audience, as through them are their voters, i.e. the population or general audience. Creation of a new institution and allocation of additional funds for that purpose may be described as extraordinary measures. However, in the above described case, the ethnic minority itself remains not securitized, and is largely left out of discussion. Finally, ETV2 was launched and soon switched to a broader agenda (sports, culture), clearly not limited to Russian-speaking broadcasting. No funding was provided for a full-scale channel in Russian, hence the

message raised by expert community was not fully accepted by the politicians of the parliament and/or government. Therefore, despite clearly distinguishable securitizing moves, one can not conclude the securitization has succeeded in this case.

4.3. 2014: Ukrainian Connection

For Estonian society, it was evident that internal crisis of Ukraine by winter of 2014 has transformed into multilateral conflict, with Russian media increasing a degree of unbiased coverage of the events in Crimea and Donbass. The global media and politicians worldwide begun talking about information war Russia engages in not only with Ukraine, but also with the West. The response, however, varied from country to country even within one region. Contrary to that of Baltic neighbours, Estonian minister of culture Urve Tiidus was not so harsh about closing down Russian TV channels in Estonia, suggesting opening a new one instead. 'Rather, what is important in this information war <...> is whose information is more true and reliable. This means it may be advantageous to add such channels rather than ban them,' Tiidus said (Nael, 2014b). Even in this reasonable and solution-oriented suggestion, the assertion is clear that it is 'their' information not being 'true and reliable.' As will be shown below, various arguments have been raised during the channel debate, but the role of Ukrainian conflict as an impetus was admitted by ERR CEO Margus Allikmaa (Männi, 2014), with semiotician and IRL politician Mihhail Lotman pointing that channel is not a tool to solve a crisis, and should rather be tackled as a 'preventive means' (Lotman, 2014 b).

Russian TV channels are a primary source of information on global affairs for Russian-speakers, not Estonians: at the time, only 8% of Estonians considered Russian TV important source of information, contrary to that of Russian-speakers making up to 74%. At the same time, both groups considered their knowledge of global affairs almost the same, with 50% and 46% respectively (Sepper, 2015). It is evident from these figures, it was not Estonians who were considered the object of Russia's information war possible successes. With Russian-speakers not only following different media outlets, but also probably being more reluctant to Russia's agenda due to their historical heritage, common language, and widespread dissatisfaction with Estonian integration policies and hostile towards Estonian state in general. Professor Marju Lauristin, running for European Parliament with Social Democrats, argued that inactivity is not an option: 'if we do not provide information

ourselves, we will leave our Russian-speaking population for Russian channels. For some reason, this has still not been done, although in words safety, security and integration are high priorities' (Einmann, 2014). Placing integration between security and safety, Lauristin did not only refer to Copenhagen School's concept of societal security, but also suggested Russian-speakers are to be treated in a special way as Estonian state's appeal to them is constantly challenged by Russia. Referring to situation in Ukraine in early spring 2014, she extrapolated uncertainty of Donbass conflict to Estonia, saying that Russia's actions in Ukraine, including those in media space, 'is also part of our security' (Polienko, 2014). Such patronizing tone over Russian-speaking minority was prevailing in an whole debate. As one journalist put it, had taken place on a 'child-parent' level (Laurisaar, 2014) or, in Center Party politician Yana Toom's words, it was a 'mission' undertaken by 'older brother' (Rechkin, 2014), assuming that they knows for sure, what is better for *child*'s sake and what programs or channels should be excluded from the menu.

Former head of ERR board and media scholar Andres Jõesaar tried to convince the audience to address media not as a part of security. He argued, for a part of Estonian public, 'Russian-language Estonian TV channel is primarily a subject of national defense. <...> The channel's funding could be covered by rising defense spendings.' He went on, suggesting the costs are not big compared to military sector, as yearly running a channel will probably equal a cost of purchasing one armoured fighting vehicles (Jõesaar, 2014b). The same comparison with more optimistic guess about a price of two AFVs equaling operational costs of Russian-speaking channel was made by Lauristin in 2008. With 6 years, even rhetorical comparison remained in place. Not sharing Jõesaar's peaceful tone, parliament member Liisa Pakosta of IRL suggested establishing a channel is a part of 'psychological defense,' and shall be included in military budget indeed, as modern warfare is unconventional and 'non-military public servants are involved in a whole new way, no signs of distinction, but only very expensive satellite equipment' (Pakosta, 2014). The latter refers to conflict in Donbass and annexation of Crimea, which both (at least in part) were executed by soldiers in uniform without distinctive signs.

While citing Russian hybrid action in Donbass as an example, numerous experts reasonably articulated the threat as existential not only for Ukraine, but for other countries as well, including Estonia. Referent object, however, was not a whole country, but a

Russian-speaking minority, meaning that if one is informed sufficiently, it will not pose another, internal challenge to national security. While supporting the need to establish the channel, minister Tiidus, parliament member Pakosta, and sociologist Lauristin made securitizing move and placed the channel issue above every-day politics. Contrary to that, despite supporting the channel, politician Lotman and scholar Jõesaar in their remarks tried to desecurize the matter and suggest channel should be founded on usual basis, not as a crisis-solving tool.

4.4. 2014-5: Propaganda Debate

While Russian-speaking TV experiments on the basis of ERR did not prove to be sustainable in a long perspective, global politics provided new impetus for domestic debate. Annexation of Crimean peninsula by Russia and subsequent events in Eastern Ukraine not only attracted worldwide coverage and forced EU to impose sanctions on Russia, but also fuelled widespread usage of the notion of information war. With Russian state agenda on developments of bilateral relations with Ukraine broadcasted globally through Russian media being clearly different from Estonian public and governments understandings, the need for unbiased coverage of world politics in Russian and decreasing rising tensions in the Russian-speaking minority arose again.

Former journalist running for European Parliament with conservative IRL, Anvar Samost suggested Europe should 'fight Russian propaganda' in a unified manner, establishing joint initiative under the name of *Voice of Europe*. An analogy to renowned from Cold war times radio station called Voice of America, Samost's idea provoked a wide debate well beyond Estonia (Baltijskie…, 2014). With Latvia and Lithuania banning several Russian TV stations and also discussing to establish a new joint Baltic television in Russian, Estonian politicians and media executives were restrained about the proposal (Vabariigi Valitsus, 2014; Latvian Institute, 2014; ERR News, 2014). Mihhail Lotman even suggested that Russian TV is mostly harmful to people in Russia, not elsewhere, and we should not be afraid of it (Lotman, 2014a).

The most often used term in describing the TV channel before its launch, however, was (counter-)propaganda. Confirming the channel is not going to do propaganda, TV executives admitted nobody is going to rival with Russian TV stations (Ruussaar, 2014a), and channel

obviously can have guests, whose views on conflict in Ukraine are perhaps different from that of Estonian government or majority of population (Ruussaar, 2014b). However, given historical connotations, person following predominantly Russian media 'equals the government and propaganda' (Ruussaar, 2014c). According to Andrei Hvostov, journalist and Social Democratic candidate for European election, the same is perhaps true especially in Estonian context due to prevailing among Russian-speakers dissatisfaction in integration policy, since people will 'automatically perceive new TV station as a governmental propaganda' (Randlaid, 2014). Being hostile about perspective of a new channel, media scholars asserted that a TV is not enough, since narratives presented through mass media are always based on a broader heritage, e.g. history or literature, which Estonian state is not going to provide Russian-speakers with (Tatrik, 2014).

Amid crisis in Ukraine of 2014, politicians and experts in Estonia labeled influential Russian TV channels 'propagandistic' and securitized their influence over Estonia, especially its Russian-speaking minority. Russia's alleged success in media operations in Ukraine and globally, forced local decision-makers to securitize Russian media in Estonia, too. Nevertheless, according to studies, ethnic Estonians (or those speaking Estonian as their mother tongue) follow very little or no Russian media, hence the main target audience of it is local Russian-speaking community.

Referring to previous intense phase of TV debate in 2007 following Bronze Soldier crisis, in 2014 discussions over internal security and inter-ethnic cohesion became intertwined with defense matters. Hence, Russian media could have been securitized only via local Russian-speaking minority. While broadly discussing information war, several voices were raised to avoid labeling new Russian-speaking TV channel as 'counter-propaganda.' However, often discussing it in militaristic jargon or even suggesting to fund the issue through defense spendings, was present.

With 'Russian propaganda' identified as an existential threat, Samost's suggestion to fight it in a joint international manner is therefore broadening the notion of referent object from Estonia to the whole continent (or, given the election context, to European Union). The audience in this case is not only the Estonian public or voters, but a broader global dimension of decision-makers, including those in other countries. At the same time, numerous voices

were raised, suggesting the channel is not counter-propaganda and stating that Russian propaganda is not a threat for Estonia.

Finally, channel was funded by increase of relevant budget line under the ministry of culture. However, little effort was made by leading decision-makers to desecurize the issue. In a slight contrast with her previous remarks about information war, in November 2014 minister Tiidus suggested the opposite, stating 'let's try not to talk about war,' once asked if Estonia is falling behind Russia in the information war. According to Tiidus, 'channel is not an attack nor defense,' and one must focus on the content instead (Simson, 2014). Prime-minister Taavi Rõivas of Reform party admitted the government was presented with plans of content to be aired on the future channel, and asked their questions, but final decision about management and production is up to media professionals. Summarizing his government activities at the last press conference before parliamentary elections, Rõivas said of future TV channel: 'it is exactly the same free media channel as every other is, and we created the preconditions for this channel to emerge' (Vabariigi Valitsus, 2015).

4.5. 2014-5: Russian-speaking Minority

The most successful Russian-speaking asset of ERR, country's most popular radio station in Russian Raadio 4, lost thousands of followers in 2014, who clearly expressed their criticism over 'pro-Ukrainian' stance and 'little amount of Putin's position.' ERR leadership admitted the problem, although in part tried to tie it with growing rivalry with privately owned radios (Paris, 2014).

In May 2014, minister of culture Urve Tiidus brought together an advisory commission to discuss mediaspace in Russian. Out of 16 members of the commission, two were Russians, and slightly below half worked in the media industry at the moment. The most surprising figure, perhaps, was deputy director of Estonian Security Police Martin Arpo. Involvement of Security Police (Kaitsepolitsei or *Kapo* in Estonian) was questioned by several Russian-speaking journalists, who suggested it will offer *'our* good propaganda instead of *their* bad propaganda' and predicted 'moral defeat' of the channel before the actual start (Garanža, 2014; Titov, 2014). Kapo's work area, indeed, has little to do with the media management. However, from mid-1990s onwards Kapo publishes a yearbook, where institution outlines it main achievements and successes. Among them, often popular local

Russian-speaking politicians are criticized of their alleged connections to Kremlin or Russian Embassy in Tallinn, as are several low-scale media outlets, colloquially labelled 'propagandistic' over the years (Kaitsepolitsei, 2020). Despite controversial composition, after initial meeting the commission suggested to increase funding of Russian-speaking radio and web news service of ERR, and launch a brand-new public TV channel in Russian (Mihelson, 2014).

Local Russian-speaking journalists and public figures were eager to discuss perspectives of a TV channel. Information war discourse was common within the minority, too. Several journalists employed at a preoperational stage before the air of ETV+, rushed to confirm it will be unbiased, should not be 'counter-propaganda' and they are not going to follow guidelines from Estonian government on the way they cover events in they programs, if received any (Solomina, 2015; Sokol, 2015; Loide, 2015). The fact itself that public broadcasting journalists found such wording suitable for description of their own work, draws special attention to the matter: even they perceived the channel as a part of information war but tried to convince the Russian-speaking audience it will be impartial.

One of the most prominent politicians of the minority, MEP Yana Toom of Centre Party was clear: 'the aim of ETV + is to resist Russian propaganda and to adequately inform local Russian-speakers about events on which they receive allegedly false information from Russian TV programs'. With experience in journalism before entering into politics, Toom took advantage of criticizing Russian-speaking media decline in a broader sense and tied it with the peculiarities of Estonia's Russian-speaking school system. Strong supporter of state-paid full schooling in Russian, Toom predicted ETV+ will mostly be run by diletants, who are unprofessional due to allegedly discriminatory education system (Toom, 2015).

Lack of experienced and qualified local Russian-speaking personnel was evident to numerous observers. While some asserted to the opportunity of collaboration with liberally-minded TV channels of the former Soviet Union (Kopylkov, 2014; Toots, 2014), others emphasized the necessity for broader coverage of local issues, brought up by local people, making their voices heard (Kitam, 2014; Ladõnskaja, 2014). This should help people familiarize with the content, as both the topics and the journalists would be 'their own'.

Toom's ally from Center Party, member of Riigikogu Mihhail Stalnuhhin, was ironic and skeptical about TV channel for Russian-speakers. Speaking at the parliament, he criticized previous unsuccessful integration policy: 'instead of improving the lives of these [Russian-speaking] people and talking to them in a human way, of course, we went the other way <...> public money was given to launch a separate TV channel for the Russians'. Famous for his stance as a very skeptical of Estonian state in general, Stalnuhhin thus challenged the idea of a special channel for Russian-speakers and alluded integration and language policy over the years must have been different and probably less conservative. To illustrate his point, he asserted that the state should 'in advance' launch a channel in Arabic and Swahili, since 'in a few years a larger number of Swahili-speaking people will arrive' to Estonia, referring to EU migration quotas (Stalnuhhin, 2015). Needless to say, sardonic remarks did not provoke further debate at the parliament. In this commentary, Stalnuhhin did not only make somewhat racist remarks and exaggerated the amount of Europe-wide allocated refugees (Estonia had to accept slightly above 240), but also suggested in Saidian way that for more than two decades autochthon population has treated Russian-speakers the way those migrants are treated.

Russian-speakers in Estonia is a relatively big but poorly organized diaspora. With local media outlets in Russian being in decline for years both in terms of quality and amount, establishment of a new TV channel presumably should have encouraged those belonging to Russian-speaking minority to support it, as one would provide people with new and unbiased medium to discuss their agendas. However understanding the framing and unspoken language of policy-making, journalists and public figures of the minority emphasized the new channel should be not only independent from government, but in way must also contribute to identity-building process, as was noted one of the experts (Nael, 2014a). Stress not only on the language, but also on the personnel choices and well-pronounced independence is a mark of uncertainty about the group itself. Ethnic minority with a weak self-organisation, it is forced to construct its identity even in a situation, when it is not questioned. Or, in Roe words 'the group may necessarily be imbued, both by itself and by others, with a certain 'security-ness' that, if removed, necessarily results in the death of the minority itself' (2004).

Rather exceptional in a above mentioned debate, translator Andrei Tuch suggested that channel is not needed, since it will lack both audience and journalists, as the market is not big enough to ensure quality and consistency of a TV product, and launching a channel will deprive Russian-speakers of motivation to learn Estonian. However negative in tone, Tuch aptly noted that 'launching a full Russian-language public TV channel may be seen as a gesture of indulgence that a previously reluctant Estonia can now make' (Tuch, 2015). Thus, ethnic minority could fully understand majority's superior role, but would accept it as a sign of a defeat of decades-long conservative language policy – if Russian-speakers were assimilated linguistically and politically, the state would hardly address the issue via launch of a TV channel. Hence, minority is accepted as such and its identity is even supported by the government, which should allow to desecurize its identity. Or, in Jutila's words 'if governmental policies are informed by multiculturalist ideas and those ideas are widely supported by the majority, then the representatives of a national minority do not have to securitize their identity in order to have specific minority rights' (2006). On the contrary, from Estonian government's point of view, the additional effort was paid and funding was provided for Russian-speakers, which provides us with an example of a securitized minority.

4.6. 2015: The Channel in Party Platforms

The 2015 elections of national parliament Riigikogu resulted in a change of legislature composition: in addition to previously represented four (liberal Reform Party, social liberal Center Party, Social Democrats, and conservative Pro Patria and Res Publica Union), two new parties were elected to the parliament: far-right Conservative People's Party of Estonia and conservative Free Party. Thus, the parliament composition significantly shifted to the right of political spectrum. Given the changes in a political landscape with emphasis on right-wing ideologies and regional securital uncertainty amid developments in Ukraine, the campaign prior to the elections provided a ground for security-themed debate beyond traditional military domain.

In case of the six elected parties,[9] platforms presented during campaign period mostly contained sections on integration or social cohesion, as well as safety and security. These often included provisions or suggestions, related to public TV in Russian or topics of informational warfare. Pro Patria and Res Publica Union or IRL had a small section on public broadcasting in its platform, including the idea of a party member Anvar Samost, stating that Russian-speaking channel shall be launched in 'tight cooperation with other states and public broadcasters interested.' It also promised to broaden 'the opportunities of the Russian-speaking audience to receive neutral information about events in Estonia.' The section on security warned readers about Russian ambitions for military actions abroad, and urged to resist hybrid conflicts and develop social cohesion within society in order to 'oppose Russia's information war' (IRL, 2015). The Estonian Free Party was laconic, stating 'We support the development of high-quality public Russian-language media.' Admitting difficulties of current security situation in the region, the Free Party platform tied it with internal safety, stating the state has to follow 'Russian pressure' on the issues of language and ethnicity[10] (Vabaerakond, 2015). Conservative People's Party of Estonia or *EKRE* did not mention any of the topics related to media in their platform. However, one admitted they are going to ensure 'comprehensive security in cooperation with non-military structures' (EKRE, 2015). The latter can be interpreted in numerous ways, which does not allow us to conclude it was the pretext for a Russian-speaking media issue.

Outlining security goals, Reform Party included the notions of 'psychological security,' 'hostile information operations,' and providing 'objective information' to Estonian residents in their promises for upcoming election.[11] Opposite to its politicians' previous rhetoric, Reform Party also opted for global Russian-language TV channel, jointly funded by NATO allies. At the same time, Estonia's own Russian-speaking channel idea was not abandoned. It was still open for interpretations though, suggesting the viewers must have an opportunity to choose subtitles either in Estonian or Russian, or Russian voicing if watching public TV via digital hardware. Promising salary increase to ERR journalists, the party also referred to

[9] Other than these six parties did not have maximum amount of candidates for the election, often resulting in media leaving them out of debates reserved for 'big' parties. Therefore, their agendas are not included in this study.

[10] Est. keele- ja rahvuspõhise ebastabiilsus.

[11] Est. "Eesti elanike objektiivne informeerimine ning psühholoogilise kaitse arendamine, mis võimaldaks vältida vaenulike infomanipulatsioonide mõju."

Russian-speakers, asserting ERR has to provide 'all groups of the society' with 'information based on democratic values of Estonia' (Reformierakond, 2015). Estonian Center Party outlined various security-related activities in their platform, summarizing them as ability of Estonia 'to cope with unconventional threats, including hybrid warfare.' Discussing media, the party suggested media should be free and diverse. According to the program, the media channels can be categorized in three types: 'private, public and municipal' (Keskerakond, 2015). The latter probably refers to media assets of Tallinn and number of smaller municipalities, run by the Center Party. In sections devoted to culture and integration, program by Social Democrats promised to open a 'Russian-language ETV channel,' ensure its funding and open its office to mostly Russian-speaking Ida-Viru region. The security-themed section did not include provisions on hybrid or information warfare (SDE, 2015).

Therefore, all big parties but far-right EKRE in one way or another made a mention of a TV channel in Russian, either perceiving it as a subject of culture and social cohesion, or purely a security matter. While sharing an understanding regarding the necessity of a channel, several parties still proposed slightly different operational solutions, e.g. a regional studio or subtitles for existing broadcasting. Also, parties justified the need to establish a channel in a different manner. Discussing broad concepts of security, several of them included notions such as informational warfare as a challenge in their programs, praising support of a Russian-speaking channel as a solution. While not applicable to each out of six programs, in case of IRL and Reform Party, one may see an outlined existential threat (hybrid warfare, clearly or allegedly attributed to Russia), and referent object (social cohesion, which is ensuring Estonian sovereignty). With voters supporting, among other things, those proposals of the parties, securitization can be considered successful.

Overlapping approach to security matters can be explained by fact that following the elections, winning Reform Party included IRL into governmental coalition aside their previous partner Social Democrats. Therefore, all the three of coalition parties supported the channel, but two of them legitimized it as an issue of security.

5. Conclusions

The current master's thesis explored securitization in relation to Russian-speaking minority and media in Estonia. Securitization theory emerged as an analytical tool for security studies following the fall of bipolar world, initially broadening security dimension to environment and economics. Broadly defining security, scholars suggested that securitizing is possible through speech act. Later on, securitization theory has been applied to other domains, including the issue of ethnic minorities in Central and Eastern Europe. One of these, Russian-speakers in Estonia, make up to a quarter of Baltic country's population. With sophisticated history of relations with autochthon population, level of Russian-speakers' integration with Estonian society varied significantly over time, depending on age, income, citizenship, knowledge of Estonian and other factors.

Estonian Russian-speakers demonstrate diverse patterns in following various media. Aside declining local newspapers and stable radios and news websites, the television market is slightly different. Due to numerous legal and economic preconditions, local privately owned Russian-speaking TV stations have not gained popularity, and TV stations broadcasting in Estonian have neither. This resulted in Russian-speakers being adherent to TV stations broadcasting from Russia, or those officially registered in European Union and transmitting Russian TV content under franchise.

During two major political crises, Estonian public considered such media consumption pattern somewhat dangerous for country's well-being. Several voices were raised to launch a public Russian-speaking channel on the basis of national broadcasting ERR. The thesis explored two case studies of public debate on the matter: the situation following so-called Bronze Soldier crisis of 2007-8, and the one following Russian annexation of Crimea and beginning of war in Donbass of 2014-5.

With importance of sufficiently informing Russian-speakers realized by decision-makers from early days of restored independence, the debate over necessity of public TV for Russian-speakers saw two main phases, related to domestic (Bronze Soldier crisis) or global (Crimea annexation and Donbass war) events. In the first phase of 2007-8, the identified existential threat has been twofold, including both part of local Russian-speaking minority, as

well as Russian media outlets and allegedly Russian special forces, who carried out cyber attacks. Due to Russian-speakers media habits being different from that of Estonians, several politicians and experts have raised concern about the extent they are informed regarding developments in Estonia. Several options were suggested, including temporary TV channel, subtitles for existing ETV in Russian or Estonian, or commissioning talk shows from a privately owned TV station. In their rhetoric, numerous speakers alluded to propagandistic nature of Russian TV, and tied it to various topics, even including interpretations of World War II events. Little consensus could be observed between politicians or opinion leaders, resulting in launching ETV2, which only had daily newscast and couple of project-funded talk shows. Once ETV2 was launched with minimal effort from the management of ERR, and little additional funding from the budget, the debate over informing Russian-speakers cooled down.

Following tragic events in Ukraine with annexation of Crimea and war in Donbass, the debate over necessity of a TV channel for Russian-speakers intensified again, citing Russian alleged success in hybrid and information war as a cause. Again, several initiatives were suggested, ranging from a joint Europe-wide TV channel in Russian to finally approved by the government Estonia's own public Russian-language channel, which was eventually named ETV+. Here, the widespread discussion over information war can be observed. Several public figures described the ongoing situation as modern-day war, therefore suggesting ETV+ has to be perceived as a part of information or psychological security. Most of politicians and experts were in favor of creation of the channel, regardless of their ethnicity, language of publication, political or professional affiliation. Less supportive or negative views on the channel have been expressed too, citing little budget, lack of professional Russian-speaking journalists and distrust of the audience as main obstacles for success. The tone of the publication did not depend on a context, with parliament members expressing their views in the same way as others.

The overview of 2015 parliamentary elections party programs allows us to conclude, despite discrepancies in the details, the consensus over ETV+ was common with most of big political parties. Numerous journalists, media executives and politicians struggled to convince the audience about new channel not being a tool of governmental propaganda. Russian-speakers especially criticized little presence of their ethnic group in preparational activity of the

channel, as well as brief involvement of Security Police. Although some raised concerns over paternalistic way in which Estonians launch a channel for Russian-speakers, others expressed a hope the channel will help minority to strengthen its identity. Remarkable part of the debate focused on personnel matters and funding, the latter often confronted with military spendings. After vivid and diverse public discussion, involving wide range of opinions, ETV+ was founded and cited as one of outcomes of the work prime-minister Rõivas' cabinet carried out, while in office.

Current master's thesis allows for several developments in the future. While it can be assumed that above mentioned discussion over the channel involving propaganda-related vocabulary was not warmly welcomed by the channel's audience, it is hard to establish a strong correlation between channel's rather modest reach in subsequent years and its previous securitization. With changes in Estonian media market in recent years, the composition of TV channels and programs have changed significantly, resulting in audience adjusting their preferences. Unprecedented pandemics of COVID-19 and relevant coverage in the media allow for new empirical studies, combining both the securitization and the media of/for ethnic or linguistic minorities. Also, with possible technological shifts and TV advancements in digital sphere, new possibilities for studies arise. Even within relatively stable domestic political situation without clearly articulated inter-ethnic conflict, securitization of Russian-speaking minority in various fields can be studied in Estonia, or in comparison to other similar cases. Russian-speaking minorities are present in several countries in Europe and beyond, with public media Russian-language outlets available in many of those, making a solid foundation for subsequent studies.

Kokkuvõte

Käesolev magistritöö "Eesti venekeelse meedia julgeolekustamine ETV+ kanali näitel" analüüsib kanali loomisele eelnenud arutelu julgeolekustamise teooria abil. Poliitikute, ekspertide ja ajakirjanike osalusel toimunud arutelu järel telekanal ETV+ hakkas tööle 2015. aastal Eesti Rahvusringhäälingu osana.

Alustuseks, magistritöös vaadeldakse Kopenhaageni koolkonna välja töötatud julgeolekustamise (*securitization*) teooria. Teooria laiendab julgeoleku mõistet mittesõjalistele valdkondadele. Kopenhaageni koolkonna järgi küsimus muutub julgeoleku küsimuseks, kui see asetatakse igapäevase poliitika kohale ning kui julgeolekustaja veenab sihtrühma eksistentsiaalse ohu suhtes, mida see referentobjektile kujutab. Vaatamata ulatuslikule kriitikale on julgeolekustamine rakendatav ka rahvusvähemuste küsimuste puhul.

Magistritöös uuritakse Eestis elavate venekeelsete inimeste sotsiaalset ja poliitilist tausta, pöörates erilist tähelepanu venekeelsele meediamaastikule. Seejärel uuritakse ETV+ teemalises arutelus kasutusel olnud argumente.

Pärast valdavalt siseriikliku (nn Pronksiöö) või piirkondliku (Krimmi annekteerimine ja sõda Ida-Ukrainas) ulatusega kriisi hakati muret väljendama Eesti venekeelse vähemuse pärast. Eriliseks tähelepanu objektiks seejuures sai kõnealuse grupi arvatav vastuvõtlikkus Venemaa valitsuse kontrollitud meediale ning seetõttu on seatud kahtluse alla venekeelsete inimeste lojaalsust Eesti riigi suhtes. Seega, venekeelsed inimesed olid Eesti avalikus arutelus kujutatud rühmana, mis on Vene infosõja suhtes kõige haavatavam. Erapooletu meediakajastuse tagamiseks üritati aastatel 2007-8 luua avalik-õiguslik venekeelne kanal. Need pingutused ei kandnud vilja ning riik piirdus venekeelsete telesaadete tellimise toetamisega.

2014.–15. aastail elavnenud arutelu venekeelse kanali üle langes kokku Euroopa parlamendi (2014) ja Riigikogu (2015) valimistega, muutudes poliitikute ja kandidaatide poolt laialdaselt arutatavaks teemaks. Nii telekanali pooldajad kui ka vastased viitasid oma argumentatsioonis Ukraina kriisile ja Venemaa hübriidsõjale. Julgeolekustavad märkused olid ühiskondlikus

debatis laialdaselt levinud, sõltumata kõneleja rahvusest ja/või emakeelest, poliitilisest või ametialasest kuuluvusest.

Kohalik venekeelne vähemus oli arutelu varajases etapis vähe kaasatud ning selle avaliku elu tegelased olid uue kanali loomise viisi ja ajastuse suhtes skeptilised. Mitmed poliitikud ja ajakirjanikud üritasid publikut veenda, et uue kanali puhul ei ole tegemist vastupropaganda vahendiga. Kanali loomine oli erakondlikust poliitikast üle, sest nii koalitsioon kui ka opositsioon peamiselt toetasid seda, kuigi erinevaid põhjendusi kasutades.

Magistritöös jõutakse järeldusele, et julgeolekustatud ühiskondlik arutelu kui selline ei ole piisav, et hinnata kanali taju sihtrühma poolt ja selle edasist sooritust. Seetõttu pakutakse välja mitmeid muid võimalusi edaspidisteks uuringuteks.

Märksõnad: Eesti, meedia, rahvusvähemus, julgeolekustamine, venekeelne vähemus

Резюме

В настоящей магистерской работе «Секьюритизация русскоязычных медиа в Эстонии на примере телеканала ЭТВ+» при помощи теории секьюритизации анализируется предшествующая созданию канала общественная дискуссия. После дискуссии при участии политиков, экспертов и журналистов телеканал ЭТВ+ начал работу в 2015 г. в составе Эстонской общественной телерадиовещательной корпорации.

Во-первых, в магистерской работе рассматривается разработанная Копенгагенской школой теория секьюритизации (англ. *securitization*). Данная теория расширяет понятие безопасности за пределы военной сферы. Согласно Копенгагенской школе, какой-либо вопрос становится вопросом безопасности, когда он ставится выше обычного политического процесса, и актор убеждает целевую аудиторию в экзистенциальной опасности для референтного объекта. Несмотря на обширную критику, теория секьюритизации применима в исследовании национальных меньшинств.

В магистерской работе исследуется социальный и политический контекст русскоязычных людей, проживающих в Эстонии. При этом, особое внимание уделяется традиционным медиа, работающим в стране на русском языке. Затем исследуются аргументы, применявшиеся в ходе дискуссии об ЭТВ+.

После преимущественно внутреннего (т.н. Бронзовая ночь) или регионального (аннексия Крыма и война на востоке Украины) кризиса многие выражали озабоченность в отношении проживающих в Эстонии русскоязычных. Объектом пристального внимания при этом стала предполагаемая восприимчивость данной группы к подконтрольным правительству Российской Федерации средствам массовой информации. Ввиду этого, многими ставилась под сомнение лояльность русскоязычного меньшинства Эстонской Республике. Таким образом, в общественной дискуссии внутри Эстонии русскоязычные люди были изображены в качестве группы, наиболее уязвимой к российской информационной войне. Для обеспечения независимого освещения событий в 2007-8 гг. планировалось создать общественно-правовой телеканал на русском языке. Эти усилия не увенчались

успехом, и государство ограничилось поддержкой производства отдельных русскоязычных телепередач.

В 2014-15 гг. дискуссия о русскоязычном канале вновь оживилась и совпала с выборами в Европейский (2014) и национальный (2015) парламенты, став предметом широкого обсуждения со стороны политиков и кандидатов. Как сторонники, так и противники создания телеканала в своей аргументации ссылались на кризис в Украине и гибридную войну России. В общественной дискуссии была широко распространена риторика секьюритизации, вне зависимости от национальности и/или родного языка, политической или профессиональной принадлежности делающего высказывание лица.

На раннем этапе русскоязычное меньшинство было слабо вовлечено в дискуссию, и некоторые ключевые фигуры данного меньшинства скептически высказывались о способе и времени создания телеканала. Ряд политиков и журналистов стремились убедить публику, что новый канал не будет средством контрпропаганды. Создание телеканала было выше партийной политики, поскольку как коалиция, так и оппозиция в основном поддерживали его, хоть и приводя при этом различные доводы.

Магистерская работа приходит к заключению, что изобилующая примерами секьюритизации общественная дискуссия как таковая не является достаточной, чтобы оценивать восприятие канала целевой аудиторией и его дальнейшие показатели. В связи с этим, предлагается ряд возможностей для потенциальных исследований.

Ключевые слова: Эстония, медиа, СМИ, национальное меньшинство, секьюритизация, русскоязычные

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